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**Department of Commerce and Insurance
Commissioner Paula Flowers**

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Attorney General Responds To Recent Theft of Personal Data
of T.J. Maxx, Marshalls, HomeGoods and A.J. Wright Customers**

Tennessee Attorney General Bob Cooper is urging Tennesseans who have shopped at T.J. Maxx, Marshalls, HomeGoods and A.J. Wright stores to closely monitor their financial statements and credit reports following the recent theft of data involving customers' information.

TJX Companies, Inc., operator of TJ Maxx, Marshalls, HomeGoods and A.J. Wright stores, reported its computer systems were hacked late last year and customer data had been stolen. It is not yet known how much or what kind of information may have been taken. Company officials said the hackers broke into a system that handles credit and debit card transactions as well as checks and merchandise returns for customers throughout the United States and possibly some other countries. The companies' websites indicate stores in Tennessee include 24 T.J. Maxx, 12 Marshalls, six HomeGoods and five A.J. Wright stores.

To help ensure Tennesseans are protected, the Attorney General's Office has contacted the TJX Companies, Inc., making them aware that the Office is monitoring the situation.

Consumers may be concerned about identify theft. ID theft involves using an

individual's personal information to make purchases, obtain credit, get loans, access bank accounts, rent property, obtain employment or commit crimes.

"It's imperative to be pro-active or you may find out too late someone else has maxed out your credit cards," Attorney General Cooper said. "Always review your credit card and debit card statements and other account information for unauthorized use."

"The amount of time it takes to recover one's good credit resulting from identity theft can take an emotional toll on consumers," Mary Clement, director of the Division of Consumer Affairs, said. "It is also a very lengthy process to recapture lost money. Consumers should make sure they do all they can to protect their personal information by shredding documents before throwing them away. If you have been a victim of identity theft, please contact the Division of Consumer Affairs at www.state.tn.us/consumer or call 1-800-342-8385."

The Attorney General and Division of Consumer Affairs offer steps you can take to minimize the risk that your personal information will be used without your permission:

- *Beware of individuals who contact you by phone or email claiming to be from TJX companies, Inc. Legitimate companies and government agencies will not contact you by phone or email to confirm your personal information.

- *If your information has been compromised, request a copy of your credit report. By law, you are entitled to receive a free credit report every 12 months from each of the three major credit bureaus. Receive the free reports by calling 1-877-322-8228 or by logging on to www.annualcreditreport.com. Reports can also be requested by writing Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30348-5281.

- *Never give out Social Security Numbers or credit card account numbers over the telephone unless you know the person or company on the other end of the line.

- *Do not use personal information to register to win a prize and be careful if someone calls or emails you to "verify" a purchase or an account. Before you share personal information, call the company or bank to make sure they have authorized the email or call.

- *Be careful not to leave outgoing mail in a place where a thief can take it.

- *Shred files containing Social Security numbers, account numbers, and birth dates before disposing of them. Use hard-drive shredding software to destroy your hard drive before discarding a home computer.

If you are a victim of identity theft, call the police and the bank or the credit card issuer immediately in addition to notifying the three major credit reporting agencies. The Federal Trade Commission provides valuable information including steps to take in reporting and resolving the crime of identity theft at www.consumer.gov/idtheft. You may also contact them at 1-877-438-4338.

The TJX Companies, Inc. have set up a special hotline for customers who have questions. The toll-free number is 1-866-484-6978.